

IN THE CLAIMS

Kindly amend the claims, without prejudice, without admission, without surrender of subject matter, and without any intention of creating any estoppel as to equivalents, as follows:

1-28 (Canceled).

29. (Previously Presented) A method of fabricating a large flexible fluid containment vessel for the transportation and/or containment of cargo comprising a fluid or fluidisable material, said method comprising:

forming an elongated flexible tubular structure comprised of fabric having a first circumference;

rendering said tubular structure impervious;

forming a front end and a rear end;

sealing said front end and said rear end;

providing means for filling and emptying said vessel of cargo;

weaving the front end or the rear end of the tubular structure with warp and weft fibers or yarns, having a taper that terminates in a second circumference that is less than the first circumference, which includes one or more of the following steps of gradually eliminating warp yarns or fibers in a sequential manner as the tapered end is woven or drawing in the warp fibers or yarns as the tapered end is woven.

30. (Canceled).

31. (Canceled).

32. (Previously Presented) The method as described in claim 52 which includes the step of knitting the taper at said tapered end by gradually dropping knitting needles during the knitting of said tapered end to create the taper.

33. (Previously Presented) The method as described in claim 52 which includes the step of knitting the tubular structure.

34. (Previously Presented) The method as described in claim 52 which includes the step of braiding the taper at said tapered end by adjusting the speed of the take up relative to the speed of the fiber or yarn that is being braided.

35. (Previously Presented) The method as described in claim 52 which includes the step of braiding the tubular structure.

36. (Previously Presented) The method as described in claim 29 which includes the step of weaving the front end and the rear end with tapers.

37-43 (Canceled).

44. (Currently Amended) A large waterborne, towed flexible fluid containment vessel for the ~~through-water~~ transportation of cargo comprising a fluid or fluidisable material, said vessel comprising:

an elongated flexible tubular structure comprised of fabric having a first circumference;

said tubular structure being impervious;
a front end and a rear end being sealed;
means for filling and emptying said vessel of cargo; and
wherein the front end or the rear end of the tubular structure is formed by weaving warp and weft yarns or fibers in such a manner to have a taper that terminates in a second circumference that is less than the first circumference, wherein the tapered end is woven by gradually eliminating warp yarns or fibers in a sequential manner or wherein the tapered end is woven by drawing in the warp fibers or yarns during weaving.

45. (Canceled).

46. (Canceled).

47. (Previously Presented) The vessel as described in claim 54 which includes a knitted taper at said tapered end formed by gradually dropping knitting needles during the knitting of said tapered end to create the taper.

48. (Previously Presented) The vessel as described in claim 54 which includes a knitted tubular structure.

49. (Previously Presented) The vessel as described in claim 54 which includes a braided taper at said tapered end formed by adjusting the speed of the take up relative to the speed of the fiber or yarn that is being braided.

50. (Previously Presented) The vessel as described in claim 54 which includes a braided tubular structure.

51. (Previously Presented) The vessel as described in claim 44, wherein the front end and the rear end are woven having tapers.

52. (Currently Amended) A method of fabricating a large waterborne, towed flexible fluid containment vessel for the ~~through-water~~ transportation of cargo comprising a fluid or fluidisable material, said method comprising:

forming an elongated flexible tubular structure comprised of fabric having a first circumference;

rendering said tubular structure impervious;

forming a front end and a rear end;

sealing said front end and said rear end;

providing means for filling and emptying said vessel of cargo; and

knitting or braiding the front end or the rear end of the tubular structure, having a taper that terminates in a second circumference that is less than the first circumference.

53. (Previously Presented) The method as described in claim 52 which includes the step of knitting or braiding the front end and the rear end with tapers.

54. (Currently Amended) A large waterborne, towed flexible fluid containment vessel for the ~~through-water~~ transportation of cargo comprising a fluid or fluidisable material, said vessel comprising:

an elongated flexible tubular structure comprised of fabric having a first circumference;

said tubular structure being impervious;

a front end and a rear end being sealed;

means for filling and emptying said vessel of cargo; and

wherein the front end or the rear end of the tubular structure is formed by knitting or braiding in such a manner to have a taper that terminates in a second circumference that is less than the first circumference.

55. (Previously Presented) The vessel as described in claim 54, wherein the front end and the rear end are knitted or braided having tapers.